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IDENTICAL LETTERS DATED 26 MAY 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 26 May 1997 addressed to you by Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, giving details of the aerial violations that have accompanied the fresh incursions into Iraq's territory by the Turkish armed forces and urging the United Nations to meet its responsibilities as laid down in the Charter and to halt the intimidation and aggression to which Iraq is constantly being subjected.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Identical letters dated 26 May 1997 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

Further to my letter of 21 May 1997 concerning fresh incursions into the territory of the Republic of Iraq by Turkish armed forces (S/1997/391, annex), I should like to inform you that the Turkish aerial violations have been continuing. The details are set forth hereunder.

1. Between 0725 and 1910 hours on 20 May 1997 Turkish fighter aircraft violated the airspace of the Republic of Iraq with 20 sorties, carried out by 10 two-aircraft formations. This aerial activity was centred on the Dohuk, Aqrah, Amadiyah, Rawanduz and Koysanjak areas.

2. Between 0820 and 1354 hours on 21 May 1997 Turkish fighter aircraft violated the airspace of the Republic of Iraq with 12 sorties, carried out by six two-aircraft formations. This aerial activity was centred on the Amadiyah, Rawanduz, Pibu and Koysanjak areas.

In conveying to you the details of this new incursion and of these violations by the Turkish armed forces, the Government of Iraq expresses its condemnation of such acts of military aggression. It does so because the practices of the Turkish forces, as represented by their repeated shelling of towns and villages in Iraq and their unlawful incursions into Iraqi territory, are in flagrant violation of Iraq's sovereignty and the inviolability of its territory and airspace, just as they are incompatible with relations of good-neighbourliness, the Charter of the United Nations, the norms of international law and the 1926 Iraq-Turkey boundary agreement. These practices may also undermine stability in the region as a whole, which is suffering primarily from the anomalous situation created by the United States of America and its allies in northern Iraq.

As stated in my previous letter, the Turkish Government bears full international responsibility for the acts of aggression it commits inside Iraqi territory and for all their consequences, regardless of the alleged reasons it gives.

The Government of Iraq reserves its legitimate right under international law to determine an appropriate response to such brutal military aggression and to seek compensation for the damage caused by these Turkish breaches and violations of Iraq's territory and airspace and for the human suffering inflicted on Iraqi citizens by these acts of aggression. Through you, it renews its call to the Government of Turkey to reconsider its policy with respect to the situation in northern Iraq, to promote the collaboration of the two countries on the basis of considerations of good-neighbourliness and mutual respect for sovereignty and to eliminate the reasons for the persistence of a situation that jeopardizes the interests of both countries.

As, through you, I reiterate my country's call to its Turkish neighbour to respect Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity, I express the hope that the United Nations will meet its responsibilities as laid down in the Charter and that it will halt the intimidation and aggression to which my country is constantly being subjected.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq